

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 DPW-01 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 SY-03 DRC-01

EUR-25 /153 W

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R 051040Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8439

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 2768

CINCPAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: FORMATION OF NEW PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

REF: VIENTIANE 2760

BEGIN SUMMARY: REFTEL REPORTS ROYAL INVESTITURE AND FORMATION OF NEW LAO COALITION GOVERNMENT (PGNU) AND THE JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL (JNPC). THIS CABLE RECAPITULATES MAJOR NEAR-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THIS EVENT. FORMATION OF THE PGNU AND JNPC STARTS THE CLOCK RUNNING ON THE 60-DAY PERIOD FOR WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FOR THE RETURN OF POWS. IT WILL INTRODUCE LPF INFLUENCE IN CABINET DELIBERATIONS, AND IN THE DAILY OPERATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES. LPF PARTICIPATION IN THE NEW PGNU MAY ALSO DIMINISH OUR ACCESS TO AND INFLUENCE UPON GOVERNMENT POLICYMAKERS AND MAY IMPAIR CERTAIN U.S. OPERATIONS. END SUMMARY

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1. DURING SIX MONTHS WHICH HAVE ELAPSED SINCE TWO LAO PARTIES SIGNED THE PROTOCOL TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT OF FEBRUARY 1973, ATTENTION HAS BEEN PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON PREPARATIONS FOR FORMATION AND ON STEPS U.S. MISSION HAS TAKEN TO ADAPT TO NEW SITUATION CREATED BY LAO ACCORDS. WITH FORMATION OF NEW PGNU AND JNPC, WE THOUGHT IT USEFUL TO RECAPITULATE BRIEFLY MAJOR NEAR-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THIS EVENT, AND SOME OF THE ISSUES WE BELIEVE WILL SOON ARISE. A LATER MESSAGE ANALYZES THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CABINET AND ITS MAJOR INTERNAL POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS.

A. WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES - ALL TROOPS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL, EXCEPT THOSE PERMITTED UNDER THE 1954 AND 1962 GENEVA ACCORDS ON LAOS, MUST BE WITHDRAWN FROM LAOS NO LATER THAN 60 DAYS AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PGNU AND JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL. THIS PROVISION APPLIES TO AN ESTIMATED 55,000 NVA IN LAOS, AS WELL AS TO 2,000 THAI VOLUNTEERS AND 130 U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL, APART FROM THE 30 UNIFORMED AMERICANS ACCREDITED TO THE RLG AS MEMBERS OF THE U.S. DAO, AND A 19-MAN MARINE SECURITY GUARD DETACHMENT.

B. RETURN OF CAPTURED PERSONNEL - THE RETURN OF ALL PERSONS, "REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY," CAPTURED AND IMPRISONED DURING THE WAR IS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THREE STAGES AND COMPLETED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL. NEITHER LAO SIDE HAS ADMITTED THAT IT HOLDS LAO PRISONERS FROM THE OTHER SIDE (ALL LAO HAVE ALLEGEDLY "RALLIED"). THE LPF ADMITS IT HOLDS ONE AMERICAN CONTINENTAL AIR SERVICES PILOT (EMMET KAY), WHO WAS CAPTURED LAST MAY 7, AND APPROXIMATELY 630 THAI. THE RLG HOLDS AN ESTIMATED 80 NVA. THE PROTOCOL ALSO CALLS UPON EACH SIDE TO GIVE TO THE OTHER, WITHIN 15-30 DAYS OF ITS SIGNING, A LIST OF NAMES OF THOSE WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY. THIS HAS NOT YET BEEN DONE, BUT MAY FOLLOW FORMATION OF THE NEW PGNU. THE ACCORDS ARE LESS SPECIFIC ON MIAS, WITH THE PROTOCOL MERELY PROVIDING THAT "AFTER RETURN OF PRISONERS IS COMPLETED, EACH SIDE MUST REPORT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE" INFORMATION IT IS ABLE TO DEVELOP. THE ICC AND THE ICRC BOTH ASPIRE TO A ROLE IN MIA/POW MATTERS. THE LATTER'S REPRESENTATIVE IN LAOS HAS RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE LPF DELEGATION THAT

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THOSE MATTERS WOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION IMMEDIATELY AFTER FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

C. IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON GOVERNMENT'S OPERATIONS AND POLICIES - THE NEW PGNU IS TO "WORK ACCORDING TO PRINCIPLE OF UNANIMITY" AND "ALL MAJOR ISSUES INVOLVING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THE PGNU WILL BE FIRST DISCUSSED AND UNANIMOUSLY AGREED UPON AT THE CABINET MEETING." MINISTERS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE (WHO COME FROM OPPOSITE SIDES) IN EVERY

MINISTRY MUST AGREE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES. MOREOVER, THE JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL AND THE PGNU ARE, UNDER TERMS OF THE PROTOCOL, "INDEPENDENT AND EQUAL ORGANIZATIONS" WHICH ARE TO "COOPERATE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY." NATIONAL QUESTIONS ARE TO BE "MUTUALLY AGREED" BETWEEN THE TWO BODIES. DESIGNATION OF SOUPHANOUVONG AS CHAIRMAN OF THE JNPC STRENGTHENS THAT ENTITY AND INCREASES THE POTENTIAL FOR COMPETITION, FRICTION AND STALEMATE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. WITHIN THESE PARAMETERS, IT IS UNCLEAR HOW OR EVEN WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL FUNCTION. IN HIS SUPERORDINATE POSITION, PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA MAY BE ABLE TO BREAK DEADLOCKS IN THE CABINET DELIBERATIONS; BUT, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN HIS NEUTRALIST CREDIBILITY, HE MAY OCCASIONALLY CAST HIS INFLUENCE IN WAYS UNFAVORABLE TO THE RIGHTISTS AND EVEN TO THE U.S. POSITION. LPF INFLUENCE WILL PROBABLY BE MOST QUICKLY FELT IN THOSE

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MINISTRIES WHICH THEY HEAD (FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PUBLIC WORKS, ECONOMY AND PLAN, INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA, AND RELEGION). WE MAY THUS EXPECT TO SEE LPF SOON URGING IN VARIOUS MEETINGS THE COMMUNIST LINE ON SUCH

ISSUES AS RECOGNITION OF PRG AND GRUNK/FUNK, WITH
THE PRIME MINISTER SEEKING TO KEEP LAOS ON A "NEUTRALIST"
TRACK ON SUCH QUESTIONS AS THEY ARISE. WE DOUBT WHETHER
THE COMMUNIST SIDE WILL
DEMAND THAT LAOS WITHDRAW FROM SUCH BODIES
AS ECAFE AND THE MEKONG COORDINATING COMMITTEE.

D. RELATIONS WITH U.S. - IN VIENTIANE 1459, WE
FORECAST THAT, WITH LPF PARTICIPATION IN THE NEW PGNU,
OUR ACCESS TO AND INFLUENCE UPON GOVERNMENT POLICYMAKERS
MAY DIMINISH. WE ANTICIPATE LPF EFFORTS TO ENTANGLE US
IN A THICKET OF BUREAUCRACY, TO IMPAIR CERTAIN OPERATIONS
SUCH AS ADMINISTRATION OF THE U.S. MILITARY PROGRAM, AND
TO ELIMINATE CERTAIN OTHER ASPECTS OF THE U.S. PRESENCE.
WE HAVE TAKEN NUMEROUS STEPS TO PREPARE FOR THIS EVENTUALITY
AND TO REMOVE THE MOST OBVIOUS TARGETS OF ATTACK. WE HAVE
ALSO MADE CLEAR TO THE LPF AND THE RLG THAT THE U.S. WILL

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BE GUIDED BY THE AGREEMENT AND ITS IMPLEMENTING PROTOCOL
AND BY WISHES OF THE NEW PGNU UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF
PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA BUT THAT WE STAND READY TO COOPERATE
WITH AND ASSIST THE NEW PGNU IN THE TASK OF RECONSTRUCTION
WHICH LIES AHEAD.
WHITEHOUSE

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